

Wm. Dringham
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Impartial Examination 2

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Mr. Robert Sandeman's

LETTERS on *THERON* and *ASPASIO*,

CONTAINING,

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| I. Some general Remarks on the Spirit and leading Notions of the Author of those Letters. | ✻ | III. The principal Sentiments in the LETTERS collected into Order, distinctly examined, and shown in several Instances to be inconsistent with one another, and with the sacred ORACLES, and the whole to be an unhappy Mixture of Truth with Absurdity and Falshood. |
| II. A particular Consideration of the Character of the Pharisees, and of JESUS, as drawn by Mr. SANDEMAN—Remarks upon his Conversion of JONATHAN the Jew—The Conversion of CORNELIUS the Gentile as a Contrast to JONATHAN'S. | ✻ | |

By Samuel Langdon, D. D.

Pastor of the First Church in Portsmouth in New-Hampshire.

Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ: — But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon— Every man's work shall be made manifest—

The Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 3d Chap.

PORTSMOUTH, in New-Hampshire, N. E.
Printed, by DANIEL & ROBERT FOWLE, M,DCC,LXV.

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Mr. Robert Sandeman's
LETTERS on THERON and ASPASIO,

P A R T I.

C O N T A I N I N G S O M E

General Remarks

O N T H E

Spirit and Leading Notions

Of the Author of those LETTERS.

PORTSMOUTH, Printed and Sold by D. and R. FOWLE.

M,DCC,LXV.

SINCE the Proposals were issued, several Reasons have concurred to determine the Publication of this Work by Parts. The Author begs Leave to depend on the Goodness of those Gentlemen who have encouraged him by their Subscriptions, to excuse this Method, which could not well be avoided. If this first Part is acceptable, the others, by the permission of Providence, will follow as soon as possible.



E R R A T A,

Page 68 line 7 dele *This*.---Page 70, line 6 from the bottom for *impressions* read *effects*.



PART I.

Containing some general remarks on the spirit and leading notions of the Author of the Letters.

THE Author of the *Letters on Theron and Aspasio* hath bent the force of his genius, which is sprightly and satyrical, to ruin the credit of the most eminent Divines of the last and present age, and made a general attack upon christian professors of all denominations : He has tried all manner of weapons more especially against that religion which has been look'd upon most venerable, as having the stamp of truth by the nearest conformity to the Gospel ; and endeavored not only to render it ridiculous, but to represent it as much more dangerous than open opposition to Christ, or the practice of the grossest immoralities. If we believe him, the true faith of the Apostles was very near, if not intirely, lost out of the world soon after the first general spread of christianity ; and hath never been recovered, except among a very few enlightened individuals, until he himself, with the assistance of a near friend, was so happy as to hit upon it again, and begin the glorious work of reformation. For as to the grand Reformation from popery which protestants boast of, it is a meer trifle ; ' they have laid aside the crucifix, and reserved no fragments of the cross ; but have gained nothing but a perverted Gospel.'

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If

If he has given us a true state of things, it is time to be alarmed : but if the peculiarities of his scheme are at bottom mere sophistry, calculated to form a new party of christians to the honor of their Ringleader ; if this Preacher of the apostolic gospel is himself deceived, or aims to unsettle the minds of people, and free them from the gloom of religion, that they may be easy in the indulgence of their lusts ; it seems necessary that some attempt should be made to show him his error, or prevent the mischief of his subtilty.

There may be very little probability that his scheme will so generally take, as to give sufficient evidence of its falshood, according to his own way of reasoning : yet many christians may be surprized and shaken by the boldness of his assertions, the keenness of his wit, and the mixture of some capital articles of christianity with his own crude notions. Besides ; in many, already too much disposed to think lightly of the Gospel, the secret principles of infidelity may be very agreeably cherished by several hints he has dropt, who will be ready to acknowledge themselves greatly obliged to him, for helping them to so rich a vein of ridicule to support them against that religion which has always been galling to their consciences ; though they handsomely excuse themselves from believing him more than other preachers, when he puts on the same gravity.

The manner in which he treats all who differ from him is indeed peculiarly haughty, and his own sentiments are delivered with such a singular air of assurance that there seems but little hope of convincing him of any mistake, or confronting him with equal boldness. That he

he may obviate the force of all objections on that account, and not be censured as a despicable writer, he endeavors to guard himself by giving notice in the preface, that he writes in the character of a very respectable person, who must be allowed to speak with the most undaunted confidence. He tells us that "genuine christianity must always appear as an insult upon the taste of the public, yea, the most respectable part of the public, and that in the most important matters ... that she has no reverence for the names of greatest repute in the world -- that she dogmatizes with the greatest assurance --- and boldly on the part of heaven denounces her anathema against all who oppose or corrupt that truth which she declares." Now we must know, as this author speaks in the name of genuine christianity, exactly agreeable to her peremptory instructions, and as her true and only representative, he is as fully impowered to be dogmatical in declaring what is divine truth, and to denounce his anathema against all that oppose him, as if she herself were personally present: therefore we must not be surprized at his steady contempt of all opposition, since, according to his own opinion of himself, every degree of opposition to his notions of the apostolic gospel must proceed from the same temper and disposition which opposed that gospel when first preached.

But how little notice soever he may take of any thing that can be said, however tenaciously he may adhere to his own sentiments, it cannot be amiss to show his unwary readers how truth may be separated from error, and, while he is ready to glory in many things plausibly and smartly said, give some check to his fancied infallibility.

Several

Several answers to the Letters have been published already in great Britain ; but as few of them have been spread in America, and the greater part, if we may believe our Author's representation, maintain Aspasio's definition of faith, which is far from being current in New-England, I shall venture to add my self to the number of his antagonists, and attempt to examine his Creed and consider the great question, *what is truth?* and I am the rather inclined to take upon me this labor, as the reputed Author has lately cross'd the atlantic to propagate his peculiar sentiments, and appeared as a preacher among us.

He will doubtless think me justifiable in making free use of his name, since it is now generally known ; his works having been publicly advertized under the title of *Sandeman's Letters*.

My design is not to render railing for railing ; nor shall I pretend to match him in wit and keen satyr ; but only to try his spirit, shew the general strain and tendency of his writings, examine his distinguishing principles, and endeavor to detect his fallacies.

As his declared design is "*to contend for the divine righteousness finished on the Cross, as the sole requisite to justification*" I should be very unwilling to engage against him, were I persuaded he has placed this grand doctrine of christianity in the true apostolic light, without any false colourings. If I know myself, it would give me greater pleasure to join with him, in publishing *the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe*, without any difference of nations or characters, than seem to appear against an

article

article which is the peculiar glory of the Gospel, could I see it clearly and fully stated in the Letters in close connection with every other doctrine of Christ, like the pure rays of the sun, exhibiting thro' the medium of divine revelation, all the original colours of christianity : for I remember an antient saying of one deeply interested in the cause *we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.* But when I view his whole scheme, compare one part with another, and try it by the divine standard, I am struck with the remarkable dissimilitude, and the jarring of contradictory sentiments. In some things there seems to be a good harmony ; in others a wide difference : some parts of religion take their proper place, and appear with distinguishing lustre ; others are removed quite out of sight, or darkned with a veil : he diminishes some things, and enlarges the proportions of others ; and as if all our salvation depended upon metaphysical accuracy in forming our conceptions of the nature of faith, he labours the utmost refinement on this point ; while he speaks in a very loose and doubtful manner of the principal characters of the new man, the image of God on the soul of a believer, and the practice of moral righteousness in all its branches, in a way of subjection to Christ's authority, and by the energy of his Spirit.

When I view the weapons he uses * "keen satyr, disdainful irony, the contemptuous smile, the indignant frown"...and observe with what an angry coun-

N. B. I have taken the freedom to quote some things from the Letters which pass'd betwixt him and Mr. Pike, and his other Letters.

* Epist. Correspond : P. 18.

tenance

tenance he looks round and strikes promiscuously at every man near him, especially at those who seem to be engaged in the same general cause for which he professes to contend; I cannot but suspect his zeal to be the rage of a madman, who casts firebrands, arrows, and death; or that his aim is to make *sport* by acting a feigned character. Certainly such weapons were never taken out of God's armory; they are not those spiritual weapons which once were so mighty against all opposition: they appear to be the same arms which commonly have been used against the kingdom of Christ; but rejected by the foremost champions in his cause. We find such an order as this given by a great officer of Christ's army --- *the servant of the Lord must not strive* (or, fight like a fierce disputant, catching up any weapon he can lay his hand upon, whetting his tongue like a sword, and shooting the poisoned arrows of bitter words) *but be gentle unto all men, instructive, patient of evil, in meekness teaching as children those that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the acknowledgment of the truth, and they may be recovered from the snare of the Devil, who were led captive by him, to a sober mind, to be in subjection to the will of God.*

Tho' our Author's controversy is primarily managed against the late excellent Mr. Hervy under the character of Aspasio, yet his quarrel is very general, especially with those whom he calls *popular preachers*. Towards the conclusion of his 6th Letter he is so obliging as to inform us very particularly what he means by *popular doctrine*, and what sort of teachers he levels his chief
artillery

artillery against. He says in a note, " Throughout these letters, I consider those as teachers of the popular doctrine, who seek to have credit and influence among the people, by resting our acceptance with God, not simply on *what Christ hath done*, but more or less on the *use we make of him*, the advance we make towards him, or some secret desire, wish, or sigh to do so; or on something we feel or do concerning him, by the assistance of some kind of grace or spirit; or, lastly, on something we employ him to do, and suppose he is yet to do for us. In sum, all who would have us to be conscious of something else than the bare truth of the gospel; all who would have us to be conscious of some beginning of a change to the better, or some desire, however faint towards such change, in order to our acceptance with God; these I call the *popular preachers*, however much they may differ from each other about faith, and grace, special or common, or about any thing else. For I am disposed rather to reconcile than widen the various differences among them." *

This description is contrived so as to take a large sweep, and upon occasion comprehend divines of very different characters, and opposite sentiments about the atonement, or the use to be made of it. He accordingly gives himself scope, and now and then gives a stroke at some whom he calls philosophic divines, and fashionable preachers. But he is most of all provoked with those who are tho't, by the common people, to be most evangelical: the more credit and influence any preach-

* Lett: Vol: 2. P. 245. Edit: 3d.

ers have among them on account of their apparent orthodoxy and zeal, so much the more he is put out of all patience, and fired with indignation.

In the first place, that he may effectually remove the strong prejudice of the most serious christians in their favour, he tries the utmost force of ridicule, following the maxim of some of his philosophic brethren, that *ridicule is the test of truth*. For this purpose he picks out the most exceptionable scraps in the writings of some divines of chief note, magnifies every mistake, takes advantage of every impropriety of expression, puts the worst construction upon their sentiments, and makes them speak contrary to the general spirit and tenor of their writings: there is something very peculiar in his management this way, for he has a certain knack of shewing truth in a kind of magic glass, which he uses very expertly, by which he distorts it into the visage of falsehood, so as to gain the laugh among his friends which otherwise would have been turned against himself. But the metaphorical style of some eminent preachers of his own country, and their manner of addressing their hearers, peculiarly suited to the national genius, afford him the best scope for burlesque. Their representing faith as furnished with *hands, feet, wings &c*; and ascribing to it various ideas of motion and action, such as *hasting, striving, running, fighting, and wrestling*; their use of various scholastic terms and distinctions; their speaking of faith as an *instrument* for *receiving, applying, closing with, and taking hold on Christ*; and now and then dropping some loose, unguarded, and uncouth expressions; all serve to make diversion as he goes along, and prevent

vent a dull insipid arrangement of his own sentiments in strict order. It is well he could forbear some witty turn upon the motion which the scriptures in some places attribute to faith, as when they speak of *fleeing from the wrath to come, coming to Christ forsaking all to follow him, &c* : one text seems to cross him so much that he ventures to give it a gloss of his own, that he may blunt the force of it, viz. Heb. 6. 18, *who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us* : * this text he blends with others which speak of the christian race, and in a very fly manner turns us off from attending to the full import of this beautiful allusion, by giving us a hint that it means nothing more than *denying ourselves for the sake of the heavenly inheritance, and running toward it as our home* ; though any christian of common understanding may see that the Apostle alludes to the ancient *cities of refuge* as types both of Christ and the heavenly world, and includes the whole idea of taking refuge in Christ from our first faith till we enter into that glory which is the hope of all who have believed in him.

He seems likewise to have an inclination to divert himself with the phrases of *receiving, trusting, relying on Christ, &c*. but he finds it harder to manage these in his droll way : for if they do not so exactly express the simple idea of faith, yet they come so near it, and are so frequently substituted in the sacred writings as terms equivalent to faith, that he acknowledges it very difficult to shake off the ambiguity †. However, he gives us to understand that as the popular preachers use these phrases, they are making something more than faith neces-

* Vol: 2. P. 115.

† Vol: 2. P. 116.

sary to justification*: for we must remember he is a very critical gentleman, and must have the description of faith reduced to a philosophical nicety, or we may expect the most unmerciful treatment.

But it must not be supposed he relies wholly on the force of ridicule to demolish these reputable preachers: no, he has more dreadful arms at hand, a number of heavy bulls which he at proper intervals thunders out against them. . . . With inimitable vehemence he declaims against them thro' a great number of pages . . . As the worst of hypocrites, the true offspring of the old pharisees, aiming at nothing but the praise of men and worldly interest; haughtily assuming the character of God's ambassadors, strutting in their pulpits, and setting up for a sort of factors betwixt the Deity and men: . . . As crafty deceivers, using all manner of art to delude men, and confound their understandings, in order to maintain their own dignity and authority; seasoning the gospel to the corrupt taste of their hearers; leaving no stone unturned to intercept the light of divine truth, and decoy attention to an endless variety of the most abominable jargon, which they confidently utter however absurd and impious; leading men to read the new testament backwards; throwing the apostolic order into confusion, and covering it with a mist so as the cheat may not be easily discerned; doing their business most successfully in the dark, as true servants of the grand adversary and his angels, the rulers of the darkness of this world: . . . As sworn enemies to the belief of the truth as the sole ground of hope; and to the divine justice and sovereignty: . . . As bold idolaters, or hard-

* Vol: 2. P. 112.

ned atheists, who deny the God that is above, and have set up another god, another christ, and another spirit, quite different from the God of the Apostles : ... In short he pronounces them the most hardened of all sinners, the greatest destroyers of mankind, making every one that enters into the spirit of their writings two fold more the children of wrath than before, having themselves very little chance of escaping the damnation of hell, except perhaps by repentance at the hour of death.

What an abominable set of men must these be who are blackened with such infernal characters ! ... But can he find any number of such wicked impostors, entered into a confederacy against the gospel and the souls of men ? or hath he reference only to some notorious hypocrites within the circle of his acquaintance, who are secretly deists, tho' they preach for a living ? ... No, we are much mistaken if we think he means only to point out some particular bad men among the Clergy of any one country or denomination : they are all much alike ; only such as have been supposed to be most serious, honest, and spiritual, whose conduct hath been most exemplary, and the tenor of whose discourses hath appeared most correspondent to the spirit of the gospel, are in his view the very worst of all. He discovers very particular spleen against Mess. Guthrie, Marshal, Boston, and Erskines, writers of his own nation, who have been much esteemed by those whom he calls the devout : but he passes his compliments upon other writers as he goes along ; and does not omit some strokes at Mr. Flavel ; but especially at those two renowned gentlemen Dr. Watts, and Dr. Doddridge ; " who, he tells us, " having been considered among the dissenters as a kind
of

“ of trustees for the peculiar doctrines of christianity,
 “ have shewn themselves most unworthy of the confi-
 “ dence reposed in them, by their complaisantly yield-
 “ ing up the most obnoxious of those doctrines for the
 “ sake of their reputation in the polite world ; and that
 “ in such a sly manner, as to lose as little as possible of
 “ their weight and influence among the more strictly
 “ religious and devout. The former, not content with
 “ yielding up the apostolic account of Christ as a *Divine*
 “ *Person*, hath conspired with the latter to overthrow
 “ the *gospel doctrine of faith, and the imputed righteous-*
 “ *ness.* * ” The first of these charges is an instance of
 Mr. Sandeman’s sly way of wounding the reputation of
 men whose praise is in all the churches. He mentions it
 as a fact so indisputable that it scarce requires any proof,
 that this same Dr. Watts denies Jesus Christ to be a
Divine Person ; and because it is a thing so notorious,
 he contents himself with quoting a few words from his
 treatise called, *The christian doctrine of the Trinity ; viz.*
 “ By the appointment of the Father, the DIVINE NA-
 TURE DWELLS in *Jesus the Son of man*, who of himself,
 and in himself, is but a *man*, and *could do nothing.* ” This
 remarkable quotation he would pass upon us for a glar-
 ing proof of this charge of Heresy : but his readers must
 be very eagle-eyed, or so extremely complaisant as to
 rely on our author’s judgment with implicit faith, if
 they can receive the abovementioned quotation as any
 proof at all that the Dr. denies the *divine nature* of Christ.
 The argument from this proof, stands thus Dr. Watt.
 says in the passage just quoted, The DIVINE NATURE
 DWELLS in *Jesus the Son of Man*, (ie, in the man Jesus)

Vol: I. P. 333.

without

without which *Jesus* would be but *a man*, and so could do nothing of himself ; therefore the Dr. denies that *Jesus* had a *divine nature* as well as an *humane*. Let us now hear *Jesus* speaking of himself, and see what force there may be in the same argument applied to *Christ's* own words. He says, Joh : 5. 19, 30. *Verily verily I say unto you, the son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise..... I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. Again, John 14. 10. Believeest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of my self : but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doth the works.* Now, what if some ingenious Critic, from a view of these passages, should take it into his head to affirm, by the very same curious reasoning as our author uses, that *Jesus Christ* here denies his own Divinity, and makes himself a meer man ; because he declares, that of himself he could do nothing, and attributes all his works to the Father dwelling in him ? Is Mr. Sandeman capable of blushing ? Or has he some " new principle " of knowlege or reasoning," by which he can squeeze out such strange heretical conclusions from very orthodox premises ? Or, is there no commandment against malicious slander to be found in his Gospel ?

What if we should now take the hint, turn the tables, and charge the accuser with a plain reflection upon the apostolic doctrine of the human nature of *Christ* ; for he seems to be angry, because Dr. Watts tells us, that *Jesus* would have been *but a man* if the divine nature had not

not dwelt in him : and does not this imply an exception against that account of the Mediator which Paul gives us, 1. Tim : 2. 5, 6. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time ?*

But our author checks my haste, and tells me he does not rest the proof of his charge intirely upon that one quotation ; for, if it was worth while, he could produce more, from a work published since by the Dr. “ in support of what is now quoted.” The Volume to which he refers, if I guess right, is intitled, *The glory of Christ* : but as our author acknowledges it was written in support of that passage quoted from his other treatise, it is evident enough, by the remarks already made, that there is no heresy in the latter volume.

But we must hear him a word or two farther : for Mr. Sandeman can tell us something more of this work last published ; viz. that in it Dr. Watts “ fetts forth “ at large his notion of the pre-existence and peculiar “ origin of the human soul of Jesus Christ, wherein he “ makes the great dignity of his person to consist.” But what if the Dr. hath some peculiar notions of the origin of the human soul of Christ, and endeavours to make it probable that it existed long before he assumed flesh and blood, so taking the apostles words literally, Coloss : 1. 15. *Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature ?* How will it follow, that he denies the *divine nature* of Christ in union with this pre-existent soul, any more than they who believe this Soul to have been created when a Body was prepared ? Why, our author informs us, “ the great dignity of his person is made to consist in the pre-existence and peculiar

liar origin of Christ's Soul."....Now, by the *great* dignity, our author would doubtless have us understand the *greatest* dignity, tho' he did not dare to say the Dr. affirms the latter.... But is Dr. Watts to be charged with denying the *divine* nature of Christ, because he attributes *great Dignity* to the *human Soul* of the mediator, above all other creatures, even as distinguished from the *divine* nature which was in him ? If our sagacious disputant pleases, he may undertake to prove the contrary to what the Dr. hath advanced, viz. that the human Soul of Jesus *could not* have been created before he assumed our flesh and blood, and that no more dignity belongs to it than is common to all other men, as to its origin : but christians need not give themselves much trouble about the issue of the controversy.

The second heavy charge against these two renowned Gentlemen is, "that they have conspired together to overthrow the gospel doctrine of faith, and the imputed righteousness." For proof of which he refers us to a Treatise called, *The rise and progress of religion in the Soul*, "which being written by the one, and planed and revised by the other, may justly be considered as the joint production of both." Now we are to know, that this treatise contains a most notorious opposition to the faith and righteousness of the gospel : no particular passage, indeed, is singled out ; but this only gives us a stronger intimation that the whole treatise is condemned in the lump. But I shall take the liberty to transcribe a few sentences out of that valuable work, which speak expressly of the method of a sinner's justification. Chap. 8, § 7, 8. The sinner is thus addressed, "Look upon our dear Redeemer ! Look up to this mouruful, dread-
ful,

“ ful, yet in one view, delightful spectacle ; and then
 “ ask thine own heart, Do I believe that Jesus suffered
 “ and died thus ? And why did he suffer and die ? Let
 “ me answer in God’s own words, *He was wounded for*
 “ *our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities &c.*
 “ I do therefore testify to you, in the words of another
 “ inspired Writer, that *Christ was made Sin*, that is,
 “ a sin-offering, *for us, tho’ he knew no sin, that we*
 “ *might be made the righteousness of God in him ;* that is,
 “ that thro’ the righteousness he has fulfilled, and the
 “ atonement he has made, we might be accepted by
 “ God as righteous, and be not only pardoned, but re-
 “ ceived into his favour. Nor is it necessary, in or-
 “ der to thy being released from guilt, and intitled to
 “ this high and compleat felicity, that thou shouldest,
 “ before thou will venture to *apply to Jesus*, bring any
 “ *good works of thine own* to recommend thee to his ac-
 “ ceptance. It is indeed true, that if thy faith be sin-
 “ cere, it will certainly produce them : but I have the
 “ authority of the Word of God, to tell thee, that if
 “ thou sincerely *believest* in the name of the *Son of God*,
 “ thou shalt *this Day* be taken under his care, and be
 “ numbered among those of *his Sheep*, to whom he
 “ hath graciously declared that he will give *Eternal*
 “ *Life*, and that *they shall never perish*. Thou hast
 “ no need therefore to say, *Who shall go up into heaven,*
 “ *or who shall descend into the deep for me ? For the*
 “ *Word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart.*
 “ With this joyful message I leave thee ; with this
 “ *faithful saying*, indeed *worthy of all acceptation ;* with
 “ this *Gospel*, Oh Sinner, which is *my life ;* and which
 “ if thou dost not reject it, will be *thine too.*” Let

any christian now judge, whether they who say such things as these, have entered into a conspiracy to overthrow the gospel.

But without doubt in our author's view there is a glaring corruption of the gospel even in these evangelical sentences. He has objections to make, founded on his own peculiar notions of religion ; the very same objections which he brings against a multitude of writers of the same class ; it is therefore necessary to consider the general controversy, without which it would be to no purpose to attempt a vindication of particular paragraphs. Now let us enquire what are the grounds of this general outcry against all whom he brands with the name of *Popular Preachers* ; whether he has reason to accuse them as wilful corrupters of the gospel ? Or whether their sentiments may not, upon a fair trial, be found agreeable to the truth, and liable to as few exceptions as the scheme which Mr. Sandeman himself advances in opposition to them.

Tho' our author looks upon all the popular preachers as in a conspiracy against the *gospel doctrine of faith, and the imputed righteousness*, and for that reason spares no arrows ; yet we are not to suppose they make it their business to preach and write in direct opposition to any capital doctrines of the gospel, as open professed adversaries.---He himself clears them from this charge, even by the very distinction kept up all along in his Letters, between *popular preachers*, and those whom he calls *philosophical and fashionable divines*. He grants, that he might be " * referred to many passages in their treatises, asserting almost every branch of the christian doctrine

* Vol. I. P. 42.

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“ in words not easily to be contradicted ;” tho’ he thinks
 “ he might fairly show a compleat system of self-de-
 “ pendence contained in these same treatises.” And he
 can assure us, that “ the pastors he speaks of, well know
 “ how to season and mix up the christian truth with
 “ proper ingredients, to suit the taste of the people
 “ and the people accordingly flock in multitudes after
 “ them.”---The force of this *reflection* by the way,
 might perhaps be tried with equal certainty, whenever
 we read of the *multitudes* that attended upon the
 preaching of our Lord himself, and his apostles.

But he opens the cause of the quarrel more plainly in
 vol. first, p. 28, edit. 3d, and shows what sort of men
 he aims at, how far he acquits, and for what he con-
 demns them. “ I speak not of those who have em-
 “ ployed their weapons against the *person and work* of
 “ Christ, endeavouring to make us lose sight of him as
 “ a divine person, and of his acting as the substitute and
 “ representative of sinners in the whole of his obedience
 “ unto death ; such as have got any taste of the good
 “ word of God, are not in the greatest danger of being
 “ subverted by these : but I speak of those teachers, who
 “ having largely insisted on the corruption of human
 “ nature, concluded the whole world guilty before God,
 “ eloquently set forth the necessity of the atonement,
 “ zealously maintained the scripture doctrine concerning
 “ the person and work of Christ ; yet, after all, leave
 “ us as much in the dark *as to our comfort*, as if Jesus
 “ Christ had never appeared ; and mark out as insuper-
 “ able a task for us, as if he had not finished his work ;
 “ while, with great assiduity and earnestness, they are
 “ busied in describing to us, animating us with various
 “ encouragements,

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 demns them. “ I speak not of those who have em-
 “ ployed their weapons against the *person and work* of
 “ Christ, endeavouring to make us lose sight of him as
 “ a divine person, and of his acting as the substitute and
 “ representative of sinners in the whole of his obedience
 “ unto death ; such as have got any taste of the good
 “ word of God, are not in the greatest danger of being
 “ subverted by these : but I speak of those teachers, who
 “ having largely insisted on the corruption of human
 “ nature, concluded the whole world guilty before God,
 “ eloquently set forth the necessity of the atonement,
 “ zealously maintained the scripture doctrine concerning
 “ the person and work of Christ ; yet, after all, leave
 “ us as much in the dark *as to our comfort*, as if Jesus
 “ Christ had never appeared ; and mark out as insuper-
 “ able a task for us, as if he had not finished his work ;
 “ while, with great assiduity and earnestness, they are
 “ busied in describing to us, animating us with various
 “ encouragements,

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wholly in the dark as to our *comfort*, and mark out an insuperable task for us in order to gain faith and make out our connexion with Christ. Or, in a more concise view, the Controversy turns upon these following questions *What is faith? How is it to be obtained? In what manner are we to gain comfort by the Gospel?*

Now we must observe in the first place that tho' he finds the greatest fault with Mr. Hervey's description of faith, viz, "*Faith is a real persuasion that Christ died for me;*" yet he condemns every other account of faith which he meets with in any other popular writings. He means to oppose 'the most laboured descriptions of faith even in the most celebrated authors, and that when they study the greatest niceness and accuracy.' * He will admit no such terms as *receiving, applying to, trusting in, or resting on Christ*, into the definition of faith: but that he may keep at the greatest distance from all these modes of description, he chooses to call faith, *A bare persuasion of the bare truth, or a simple persuasion of the truth of the atonement.* However, that he may not leave us wholly in the dark about his meaning, he tells us, Vol. 2. p. 29. "The apostles used the word faith or belief in the same sense we do to this day in common discourse. We are properly said to believe what any man says, when we are persuaded, that what he says is true. There is no difference betwixt our believing any common testimony, and our believing that of the gospel, but what arises from the very nature of the testimony. For thus the apostle John states the matter, 1. John, 5. 9, *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater;*

* vid. Corr. with S. P. P. 13.

“ so must produce greater certainty or firmness of per-
 “ suasion. When once a man believes a testimony, he
 “ becomes possessed of a truth ; and that truth may be
 “ said to be *his faith*. Yea, we have no idea of truth,
 “ but with reference to its being believed..... And again,
 “ P. 30, “Every one who believes the same truth which
 “ the apostles believed, has equally precious faith with
 “ them. † He has unfeigned faith, and shall assuredly
 “ be saved. If any man’s faith be found insufficient to
 “ save

† However simple a thing the belief of any common testimony may
 seem at first thought, it admits of many modes or gradual diversities,
 even though the general ideas communicated by the testimony remain
 very much the same ; and the impressions, or effects of the persuasion,
 depend both upon the importance of the thing testified, and the
 strength of evidence in which they appear to the mind. Almost all
 our ideas are in some respects complex, made up of various parts, like
 external objects of sight ; capable of being view’d and compared with
 different degrees of accuracy, and in different situations and combina-
 tions ; and accordingly they strike the mind with greater or less force,
 not merely as they appear in general either to be true or false, or be-
 come superficially known, but as we see many particulars compre-
 hended in them exciting attention, and consider their relation to our
 present or future welfare, or how they are accommodated to our pecu-
 liar condition, or call us to activity. A Person condemned to starve
 to death in a prison, at a time of general scarcity, may believe the
 report of a plentiful importation of corn with as much certainty as
 others who expect to enjoy the benefit of it ; but it will affect him
 very differently, because he expects no benefit to himself from it : and
 this instance may illustrate the difference betwixt the faith of *Devils*,
 and that which is effectual to the salvation of *men*. It is also plain to
 the observation of every thinking person, that there is a great difference
 betwixt believing things supposed to be at a great distance, and those
 which are view’d very near ; things in which our own interest is con-
 cerned, and such as relate chiefly to other men ; those things with
 which our highest hope and happiness plainly appear to be connected,
 and such as seem to touch but a part, and that some very small part
 of our interest. Likewise, the very same Object in various views and
 connections

“ save him, it is owing to this, that what he believed
 “ for truth, was not the very same that the apostles be-
 “ lieved, but some lie connected with or dressed up in
 “ the form of truth. Again, Vol. 2. P. 193, “ If any
 “ consideration beside or along with the sacrifice of
 “ Christ be admitted into one’s faith, or held requisite for
 “ his justification before God, that consideration, what

connections may appear very beautiful and desirable to one man, which is tasteless and even offensive to another. To inquire critically into all these differences in the belief of what in general appears to be the very same thing, would require a considerable volume, and perhaps would not be a trifling employment for some masterly pen. But from these cursory hints it may appear, that the distinction which our author makes betwixt saving faith and that which is common to the generality of professors is extremely loose in a religious view, especially as it relates to our *comfort*, however strictly philosophical : for who can determine whether his own faith is the very same with that of the Apostles, merely because he seems to believe the very same things ? There may be a vast difference in the minute and circumstantial views of the same general objects, and in the strength and brightness of those views, which may be discovered by the immediate or more remote effects, but can never be determined in any other way—— Therefore in the sacred writings, *they* are sometimes said to believe, who have only a general, ineffectual, transient knowledge, as the unfruitful hearers described *by the stony ground*, in the parable of the sower ; but that *peculiar faith* connected with salvation is distinguished in the new testament both by the internal and external *effects*, as it produces *love, hope, joy, &c.* in the heart, and all *sobriety, righteousness, and godliness*, in practice. Upon the whole we may conclude, that it is necessary, not only to believe the *very same things* which the apostles believed, but to believe them with the *same strength and clearness*, or with such convincing effectual evidence, as will produce the same kind of love and obedience to Christ. What we believe may be true, and yet our faith may be insufficient to save us, because the truth does not appear in its full light and importance. In strict propriety, *Truth* can never be said to be mixed with any *Lie* ; for it is impossible that any thing shou’d be both true and false at the same time, and in the same view.

“ ever it be, is his righteousness ; that is the center and
 “ spring of his charity and hope, so the leading principle
 “ of his life.”

I shall not at present take notice of several exceptions which may be made against his account of *the faith which saves men*. In the progress of this enquiry there may be a more convenient place to show what encouragement he gives his readers to build their hope upon a very superficial and ineffectual knowledge of the atonement. Let us suppose he means neither more nor less, by the *simple persuasion of the truth*, than *that knowledge of Jesus Christ* which is connected with eternal life ; agreeable to the words of our Lord himself, John 17. 3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent ;* and according to the current style of the apostle John in his epistles, in which *knowing Christ* is a phrase often used for believing in him. I am very ready to grant that *faith is a peculiar kind of knowledge of Christ* ; or that the most simple notion of the faith of the new testament is this, viz, *that it is a clear and effectual perception of the truth and importance of what the gospel declares concerning Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners*.

Let us now see whether the *faith of the popular preachers* is so widely different from the foregoing account of the *faith of the new-testament*, that they must be doom'd to perdition as conspirators against it.

If we may have leave to explain Mr. Hervey's notion of faith in as favorable a manner as is consistent with the tenor of his writings, and the method in which he himself illustrates it ; in as favorable a manner as our author would desire to have his own notions explained ; it will be

be no difficult task to show that Mr. Sandeman's controversy with him, in that respect, turns out to be--"*much ado about nothing.*"

There are evidently two very distinct parts in that description of faith which Mr. Hervey has given us, viz.

1. There must be a persuasion that *Jesus Christ died*, i. e, died as a sacrifice for sins : which our author himself affirms to be the *faith* insisted on in the gospel, the *only faith* that saves men : so he has no manner of reason to find fault thus far, or charge Aspasio and his friends with opposing the gospel doctrine of faith. 2. There must be a particular application of this general truth that *Christ died for sinners* ; the person who believes it, must have an appropriate persuasion of it, as a truth of peculiar importance with respect to himself, so that it may appear in a peculiar line of direction to him as a sinner who may enjoy the benefit of the Savior's death. It may be supposed very justly, that Aspasio does not mean to insist upon a *full assurance of hope* as essential to the faith that saves men ; but only some lower degree of *comfortable hope*, arising from the view which a sinner has of the death of Christ as a sufficient sacrifice to take away his sins in particular : and so this latter part of Aspasio's description of faith amounts to no more than this, viz, that saving faith includes in its nature some good hope in the man who believes, as to the forgiveness of his own sins. Now, notwithstanding a great part of the letters was wrote in opposition to this latter part of *Aspasio's* faith, it would puzzle the most subtle metaphysician to show the difference betwixt *this comfortable hope* arising from an appropriate view of Christ's death, and that *quiet of conscience, comfort or happiness,*

happiness, which Mr. Sandeman himself affirms to be inseparably connected with the persuasion of what Christ has done. He tells us † “ What Christ hath done, is “ that which pleases God ; what he hath done, is that “ which quiets the guilty conscience of a man as soon “ as he knows it ; so that whenever he hears of it, he “ has no occasion for any other question but this, Is it “ true or not ? if he finds it true, he is *happy* ; if not he “ can reap no *comfort* by it. If then we slight the *com-
fort* arising from the bare persuasion of this, it must “ be owing, at bottom, to our slighting the bare work “ of Christ, our considering it as too narrow, a founda- “ tion whereon to rest the whole weight of our accep- “ tance with God.” And in his third letter, ‡ he chal- “ lenges any spirit that shall dare to whisper, “ that no “ *comfort or benefit* can be derived from the bare per- “ suasion of what God hath wrought.” Again in his “ fifth letter, § he says, “ However lightly some talk of “ the bare persuasion of the truth, every man who has “ been thoroughly pinched with the impossibility of “ hope on every other side, will find therein a refresh- “ ment to his mind, far superior to all the comforts he “ ever tasted in life before. Will the news of a plen- “ teous importation of corn, in the time of famine, give “ joy to many ready to perish, and revive even the “ poorest with the hope that they may be fed ? will it “ give new life to those suffering shipwreck to hear that “ relief is hastening to them ? will the inhabitants of “ any city rejoice, in hearing that a great and liberal “ prince is to take his residence among them ? are men “ greatly comforted on many such occasions in life,

† Vol. I. p. 32. ‡ Vol. I. p. 117. § Vol. 2. P. 150.

“ while

"while yet no man knows certainly but his present day
 "may be his last? and shall it give no joy to rebels
 "against the sovereign of the universe, to hear that it is
 "found consistent with the honor of all the laws of his
 "kingdom and the highest glory of the sovereign to ad-
 "mit even the most obnoxious among them to be his
 "friends and favorites? Surely it will; and surely so it
 "has done in all ages." Here we may remark, that all
 these instances, which he brings to illustrate the com-
 fort arising from the good news of salvation by Christ,
 necessarily suppose, that the persons comforted receive
 the good news as having some relation to themselves as
 well as others; unless we may affirm that a miserable
 person will be relieved under his misery by hearing some-
 thing which has no manner of respect to his own case.
 Every degree of hope, or comfort, to a sinner hitherto
 considered as in a state of despair, must imply a change
 in his apprehensions of his own case; his hope must have
 some respect to himself, i.e. there must be some kind of
appropriation in his knowledge of the savior, before he
 can find any *refreshment to his mind*; and if this refresh-
 ment is "far superior to all the comforts he ever tasted
 in life before," the *appropriation* must be very clear and
 full, for the person who just before looked upon himself
 extremely miserable, now feels himself surprizingly hap-
 py. I think it must appear quite evident to every impar-
 tial reader, from this representation of the dispute be-
 twixt Aspasio and our author about the description of
 faith which the former gives us, that it is merely a strife
 about words; Mr. Hervey will not allow that a man
 can have saving faith till he is persuaded that Christ's
 death has some comfortable aspect on his own case as a
 sinner,

sinner, so that he can find *some relief and joy* in the believing view of it : Mr. Sandeman makes a bustle to oppose him, and yet tells us that as soon as a man is persuaded of what Christ has done, his *guilty conscience is quieted*, he immediately derives *comfort and benefit* from this knowledge, and is *happy*. He must be able to split hairs who can see any material difference in these sentiments. Perhaps we may be told, that Mr. Hervey makes this appropriation an essential part of faith, whereas saving faith respects only the work of Christ, and not any thing in or relating to ourselves : and that this hope or comfort is the effect of faith, not faith itself. But this is very little to the purpose ; for, besides that, what is so inseparably connected with faith, may justly be made part of the description ; if the Object of faith, viz. *Jesus Christ and his work*, has any relation to my own circumstances as a sinner, it cannot be known or viewed to any real advantage but in this relation, and so an appropriating knowledge of Christ belongs to the very essence of faith.

However, let it be granted that Mr. Hervey, thro' inadvertency, carries the matter too far, and blends the *assurance of hope* with the *assurance of faith*, which ought to be kept distinct ; and so leads his readers to those works of obedience which are properly the fruits and evidences of faith, that they may gain a full persuasion of their own personal claim to the benefits of Christ's death, before he will encourage them to think they have saving faith :....Must he be censured as guilty of a pernicious error ? a damning sin ? Does he deny the truth of the atonement ? or lead men off from their regard to it as the foundation of hope ? Far from it. The first and great thing which he teaches men to be-

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believe is that *Christ died* to make atonement for sins, and
 that his death is the only ground of acceptance with
 God : and all the crime he can be charged with is this,
 that he supposes no man has such a persuasion of the
 atonement as may be called *saving faith*, unless at the
 same time he has good assurance of his own justification
 by the imputed righteousness, so that he can speak with
 the same confidence as Thomas did, " *My Lord and
 my God.*" By this, indeed, He, and his friends who
 hold the same notion of faith, are sometimes much em-
 barrased, while they endeavour to comfort their con-
 verts with hope in Christ. Not observing that they
 have unwarily blended two things together, in their own
 natures quite distinct, they find themselves in some ca-
 ses intangled : some of their hearers seem to have faith,
 as far as it consists in the knowlege or persuasion that
 Christ died for sinners ; but yet they cannot with suffi-
 cient assurance make the appropriation and say, *Christ
 died for me.* In this case what can be done ? They find
 a difficulty in declaring such to be believers, because this
 is contradictory to their own definition of faith ; but
 yet they cannot consider them as unbelievers, because
 they appear to be persuaded of the truth and necessity of
 the sacrifice of Christ, and in many respects to have the
 spirit and temper of christians : so they conclude, nothing
 is wanting but farther encouragement, to remove some
 remaining scruples in these converts concerning their
 own claim, that they may have joyful confidence in Christ,
 knowing their own personal interest in him.

Thus it is easy to account for their directing persons
 so far enlightened in the knowlege of Christ, to do ma-
 ny things in order to obtain full confidence of the for-
 giveness

giveness of their own sins thro' the atonement, or assurance of salvation by Christ ; and tho' their sentiments appear somewhat confused, and inconsistent when compared together, yet no such fatal consequences are deducible from them as may warrant us to censure such writers as enemies to the saving truth, or pharisaical teachers. The worst that can follow from this notion of faith is, that it may keep back some real christians from enjoying that comfort which springs from the first clear persuasion of the excellency of Christ's character and work : tho' they see the glory of divine grace as it respects sinners in general ; yet they are not satisfied that they themselves may claim a right to the promises of the gospel as believers ; and so cannot rejoice in their own deliverance from guilt and condemnation, because they suppose no man can be a believer till all doubts as to himself are so far removed, that he is persuaded Christ is his saviour.

But this is one great objection against Aspasio ; this is the complaint exhibited against him ; that he " discourages such as God comforts, and leads forward those whom God holds at a distance." Very strange ! Will Mr. Sandeman then allow so much to depend on *ministerial* authority or instruction ? Does the comfort or discouragement of a believer arise from what the *minister* says to him ? Is it in his power to keep that man from *comfort* who has *faith* ? We are sometimes told, that ' comfort immediately flows from the knowlege of the truth ; ' that ' it gives at once superiour refreshment : ' yet, when it will serve his turn better, our author can change his note, and suspend the believer's quiet of conscience upon the skill and address of the teacher. How-

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ever, if there is any just cause for such a complaint against Aspasio; there is abundant reason to think the same or greater may be justly made against the Complainant, who discourages and dooms to destruction multitudes whom God comforts, chiefly because they refuse to be tried by his standard.

After all, it may be allowed, that it is very preposterous for Aspasio and his Friends to put men upon doing every thing requisite to the full assurance of hope, before they give them encouragement to entertain any degree of hope. *Fallibility* is the motto of all writings but those which are divine, and whatever assistance we may receive from the labors of the wisest and best of men, we must be cautious of yielding implicit faith or obedience. Yet since Mr. Hervey and the preachers of the same faith continually point their hearers to *Christ as the Lord our righteousness*, and only keep them back from drawing the settled conclusion that they have saving faith, till they have attained some assurance of hope in the very same way which is taught in the scriptures, *what spirit* is that which proclaims them enemies to the gospel, and wilful deceivers and destroyers of mankind? *Who art thou that judgest another man's Servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand.*

A writer, who is highly commended in the letters, furnishes us with a very good apology for all who hold Mr. Hervey's description of faith, giving an easy and natural account of the way by which such preachers were led into the mistake about the nature of faith. In his *testimony of the King of Martyrs*, Edinburg, p. 221, he says, "Some perhaps, finding all their endeavors after

“ the *assurance of hope*, without the lively faith of this
 “ great truth of the gospel, altogether fruitless ; and
 “ being at length brought to a clear and sure belief of
 “ this truth, and finding their consciences quieted, the
 “ disposition of their heart changed by the influence of
 “ this truth, and hope arising in their souls ; they have
 “ imagined, that all this flow’d at first from an assurance
 “ of *Christ’s being made fully theirs, and a certainty of their*
 “ *own salvation by him*, and so they have made that the
 “ nature of faith.” Thus we have good reason to sup-
 pose them to have saving faith themselves, and to aim to
 teach others that same knowledge of Christ, which is the
 real ground of their own hope ; and yet intangle them-
 selves in some difficulties and contradictions for want of
 keeping up in their own minds a clearer distinction be-
 twixt the *assurance of faith and the assurance of hope*.

Nay ; our author himself discovers great tender-
 ness towards some writers of the sixteenth century, who
 held the same notions of faith with many modern po-
 pular preachers, and so doubtless were guilty of the same
 inconsistencies. In his fifth letter, vol. 2d, p. 145,
 glancing at the Martyrs of that century (as we learn
 from the table of contents) he says, “ What if some of
 “ these, who, in the course of their suffering for Christ,
 “ were assured of their being his friends, having their
 “ eye chiefly on what they then experienced, unwarily
 “ supposed, that this assurance was in the nature of sav-
 “ ing faith ? What if, after having, at the risk of all
 “ that was dear to them in the world, maintained the
 “ work of Christ to be the sole requisite to justification,
 “ in proceeding to discourse of faith, they often chose to
 “ consider it as a principle of life and action ; and ac-
 cordingly

“ cordingly studied to distinguish it from counterfeits;
 “ by describing it in connection with its genuine fruits
 “ and effects, in order to guide professors of the faith in
 “ their self-examination ? And what if, not having their
 “ eye at once upon all the arts by which the truth might
 “ be undermined, they did not, on every occasion, suffi-
 “ ciently attend to all the apostolic distinctions about
 “ faith ? What is to be inferred from hence ? Shall we
 “ say, that these friends of Christ would have approved
 “ that assurance of an interest in him, which men now
 “ pretend to acquire by some *heart work*, in a full con-
 “ sistency with their worldly ease and reputation ?” —

But why all this tenderness towards these ancient leaders in the Reformation, while he is so severe against many propagators of the same faith in these days ? Why may not the same apology serve alike for all ? If we look over the writings of those famous sufferers in the cause of Christ, we shall find them all great friends to *heart Work*, many of them largely insisting upon exercises preparatory to faith, giving various directions and encouragements, and speaking sometimes as darkly about the nature of faith as any moderns : but what is more remarkable, they were the master workmen in *building up those very churches* in protestant nations, which now are indiscriminately censured by this *new Reformer* as genuine DAUGHTERS of the MOTHER OF HARLOTS. * But whatever mistakes they may be charged with, it seems the greatest may easily be overlook'd in those venerable writers.....*Why more in them than many modern writers ?*....Because they suffered persecution and martyrdom.....*Can no man prove his faith to be saving unless*

* vid. Vol. I. P. 185 &c..

he dies a martyr ?... Who knows, but the faith of many whom Mr. Sandeman persecutes with his pen, with such bitterness, might be sufficient to bear them up under the greatest real sufferings, as well as reproaches, and enable them to endure the loss of substance, all that they hold dear, and even life itself ? If he will be at the trouble to look back, in our own history, about a Century, he may be furnished with many examples of suffering, among the very same writers against whom he makes it his business to exclaim as the worst of Impostors.

Let us now hear what he says against those who describe faith in a *different* manner from Mr. Hervey, viz, by *receiving, applying to, trusting in, and resting upon Jesus Christ for salvation.* He tells us freely, Vol. 2. P. 63, “ That where the faith necessary to justification
 “ is described, every epithet, word, name, or phrase,
 “ prefixed or subjoined to FAITH, not meant as descriptive of the truth believed, but of some good motion, disposition, or exercise of the human soul about
 “ it, is INTENDED, and really serves, instead of clearing our way, to blindfold and decoy us ; to impose upon us, and make us take brass for gold, and chaff for
 “ wheat ; to lead us to establish our own, in opposition
 “ to the divine righteousness ; even while our mouths
 “ and our ears are filled with high sounding words about the latter....In vain shall we consult catechisms,
 “ confessions, and other publicly authorized standards
 “ of doctrine, for direction here. These are framed by
 “ the wisdom of the scribes, and disputers of this world.”
 Very freely said indeed ! More freely than becomes any man who pretends to the name of a christian. Dare he affirm, that every one, who describes faith by *receiving*
Christ,

Christ, trusting in him &c. or distinguisheth it by any such epithets as a true sincere, lively faith &c, including not only the truth believed, but some exercise of the mind in believing, really INTENDS to blindfold, decoy, and impose upon us ! If they are wrong, may it not proceed from some mistake, consistent with a good and honest design ? and may not the error be such as very little affects the capital truth ; They must be bad men indeed, who try to impose upon us, in a matter of such infinite concern as our justification before God ! And is this the character of the whole assembly of divines who composed the catechisms commonly receiv'd, and the confession of faith ? Do these abridgments of scripture doctrine, which, in the main, preserve an evident conformity to the sacred standard of faith, deserve no better compliment than the *wisdom of the scribes, and disputes of this world* ? But why ? No doubt, because they discover an *intention* to blindfold and deceive us, by describing faith as an exercise of the mind, or motion of the soul towards Jesus Christ, when we are told.....

" That faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel." This definition he keeps in his eye, and, having proceeded a few pages farther, takes an opportunity to burlesque it. In a reflection upon the popular doctrine concerning the *truth of grace in the heart*, Vol. 2. P. 102, he says, " When our systems describe faith to us, as a saving grace bestowed on us, by which we make use of Christ for salvation ; are we not led to think of some grace necessary to our salvation, beside what appeared when Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for the sins of men."

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This question may properly be answered by asking one or two more of the same kind.... When the apostle says to the Corinthians, * *As ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and knowlege, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in THIS GRACE also,* (i.e., the *grace* of liberality for which he had been commending the churches of Macedonia) are we not led to think of some other *grace* beside that which appeared in the death of Christ? And if liberality may be called a *grace*, why not faith also; especially since the apostle does not scruple to call it a *grace* in this same verse, as appears by the connexion? And if men are saved by faith, why may not *faith* be called a *saving grace*? But he intends a farther satire, in the turn he gives to that part of the definition, *by which we receive, and rest upon him alone for salvation*,...thus,... "by which we make use of Christ for salvation:" tho' if there is any true point in this wit, it must be this, that receiving and resting on Christ is making use of him; whereas no such use of him is implied in or connected with faith; or, in other words, it is not necessary that we should *receive Christ Jesus the Lord*, or *trust in him* for salvation.

This brings us to the narrow of the controversy about the *nature of faith*, as it is managed against those divines who describe it by *receiving, applying to, trusting in, resting on Christ*, &c. and often distinguish it by the epithets *true, sincere, lively*, &c: for all these terms and phrases are used, not as descriptive of the truth believed, but of some affection or disposition of the soul towards the object, Jesus Christ. That we may understand our author's general objection against all these words and

* 2 Cor. 8. 7.

phrases,

phrases, we must observe, that he makes no distinction betwixt *faith* and the *truth believed*; i. e. he considers faith as a mere passive perception of the object, quite distinct from all the actings of the mind with respect to what is presented to it, or any passions and affections produced by the view. He says, * “ When once a man believes a testimony, he becomes possessed of a truth, and that *truth* may be said to be *his faith*.† Yea, we have no idea of truth, but with reference to its being believed. The question about faith must be set aside, when the inquiry turns upon, how a man

* Vol. 2. p. 29, 30, 31.

† There is as much difference betwixt the *truth* to be believed and the *belief* of it, as there is betwixt the *Object itself* presented before the eye, and the *perception* of it by the mind: the perception must correspond to the object in view; but to set aside intirely the consideration of the *mind's attention* to the thing presented to it, and tell us that *seeing*, means nothing else but the *object* on which the eye is fixed, or that *believing* means no more than the *truth believed*, must appear to every man of common sense, the most ridiculous trifling; and to introduce such odd *philosophy* into religion must be to impose upon men with *vain deceit*. Perception is so connected with the activity of the mind, in viewing, comparing, judging &c. that it is impossible, by the nicest analysis, to separate these operations intirely from the image or impression of the object. When any truth is presented to the mind, the *perception* of it as *Truth*, may be called believing; but this necessarily implies some judgment passed upon it by the mind, some power of distinguishing betwixt truth and falsehood, by which we determine that *this is truth*. And such an actual judgment and assent to the truth, is so connected with the perception, that however distinct it may be from perception in its own nature, it is inseparable from it. Thus, the perception of an amiable object as *amiable*, is connected with the *affection of love*, so closely, that we cannot but consider them together; tho' it would be a very awkward account of *love*, for any man to tell us it means nothing else but the *object of love*, because that which he loves may be called *his love* or *delight*; such a way of talking tends to destroy all distinctions of things, and confound all language.

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" is affected by the testimony which he believes ? his
 " passions and affections are set in motion, according to
 " the nature of the thing testified, or according as the
 " testimony brings him matter of joy or grief, hope or
 " fear.....He who is justified by faith, is justified by
 " what he believes..... Let us then lay aside all questions
 " about faith, or how a man believes ; and let the only
 " question be, What does he believe ? what sense does
 " he put on the apostolic doctrine about the way of sal-
 " vation." Now according to this account of faith, the
 whole dispute, betwixt him and all those divines whom
 he opposes, is over at once, and he has raised all this
 dust for nothing. For he and they do not differ about
 the question, *What must a man believe ?* they hold and
 teach that men must believe the person and work of
 Christ as the saviour of sinners ; but about the *activity*
of the Mind in believing, or how a man must believe and
 be affected by the object. But he himself sets aside
 every thing relating to this latter question ; and so how-
 ever warm his opposition seems to be, 'it is nothing at
 all to the purpose, because he and they speak of faith
 in quite different senses.

Here then we might finish this part of the contro-
 versy. But our author will make this plea for himself,
 That those divines, whose descriptions of faith he op-
 poses, plainly undertake to describe that faith which is
 necessary to justification ; and therefore since nothing but
 this truth, *that Christ died for sinners*, can justify men,
 if they have not described this truth, he has a right to
 oppose them in his own sense of faith, in whatever other
 sense they describe it. Now tho' this seems plau-
 sible, yet it will appear to be very little to the purpose,

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if we only consider what must be the use and design of every formal definition or description of faith. No summary description or definition would be sufficient to give light to one ignorant of the scripture-doctrine concerning salvation by Jesus Christ, if the design is to show *what truth* justifies a sinner : nothing would answer this end, but a particular and clear account of this doctrine, which however it may be taken as one truth, certainly includes a great many ideas. But if the same general truth may be believed in a different manner by different persons, or perceiv'd with very different degrees of strength, clearness, and efficacy, or attentiveness to the important parts of it, then it is necessary to distinguish that appearance of truth to the mind which is essential to the full knowledge of its importance, from that which is deceitful and ineffectual ; and this is the proper design of every definition of faith, to point out the distinguishing properties of that knowledge of Jesus Christ with which justification is connected.

If a man should ask this weighty question, What is that critical something which distinguishes saving knowledge or faith, from that which seems to be the truth, and yet is consistent with a state of impenitency ? *How may I be so far conscious of this peculiar faith of the gospel, as to be comforted with the hope of my own justification by Jesus Christ ?*..... How impertinent would it be to answer him in this loose manner, ' Believing unto the saving of the soul is to believe the same thing which the apostles believed, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, in the very sense of the apostles, without maintaining any thing, in connexion with these words, subversive of their real meaning ' ! Doubtless the inquirer would proceed, and

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ask, What is implied in believing the same thing with the apostles? May not a man be fatally mistaken in supposing he knows and believes the same thing in the same striking light? Must I not be conscious of some difference betwixt my own knowlege and that which many have who perish, before my state can be altered from despair to good hope? Our author leaves him here with no other reply than, that he must prove by his works of what sort his faith is. But the answer of the generality of divines would be, ' That faith which saves men, immediately produces full complacency in that saviour revealed in the gospel, so that the soul is willing to acknowledge him as the only redeemer of guilty men, and accordingly trusts in him with fixed dependence for righteousness and happiness, and finds the strongest desires towards him and delight in him. He who thus receives Christ Jesus the Lord has that faith by which he is justified, which will become farther evident by the fruits of righteousness in a course of obedience to Christ. They do not pretend to describe faith in it's simple nature, as it is the perception or vivid portrait of the object upon the mind; which would be like describing what light is; or what that peculiar view of a curious piece of sculpture, which forms the taste of one man, while another looks at the same thing quite unaffected. But they mean to describe faith by those effects which are inseparable from a just perception of the truth, in the strong colours in which the gospel presents it. And in doing this they not only proceed in the most proper and useful manner, but are abundantly kept in countenance by the authority of the scriptures, in which faith is most frequently described by its effects. This our
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squeamish author himself is forced to acknowledge, * tho' he makes such wry faces at the same terms, when he meets with them in the writings of popular preachers. Now to charge them, on this account, with a wilful design to impose upon men, and lead them to establish their own, in opposition to the divine righteousness, is a most inexcusable instance of censoriousness.

What colour is there for such a suspicion? or, what danger of such a consequence, when all such phrases as *receiving, resting on Christ, &c.* imply a clear view of Jesus Christ as the only author of our justification and salvation? † Is there not full as much danger of leading men to establish their own righteousness by teaching them to depend merely upon certain *works of Charity*, done only in fellowship with a church of some peculiar

* Vol. 2. P. 112.

† If a man tells me some joyful news; as soon as my mind is fully impress'd with the knowledge of what he declares, I shall rejoice with him; my faith immediately produces joy; and tho' the joyful emotions of my heart are not in strict propriety my faith, yet if my friend, observing me unaffected, should call upon me to rejoice, it would be natural for me to conclude that I must have some different apprehensions of the news he brings, in order to my rejoicing with him; but I should not have the least reason to suspect his design was to impose upon me, by persuading me to rejoice before I believed him. If I have an opportunity of purchasing a diamond of great value, with the whole of my small estate; the purchase depends upon my resolving, and striking the advantageous bargain: but that which must determine me to sell all, and purchase, is a full persuasion of the worth of the jewel: if I profess to know the value, and yet hesitate, it is a sufficient evidence that I have not just apprehensions of the wealth I may possess. Now if one, concerned for my interest, should urge me to *consent* to the bargain, it is plain he desires me to *see it* in the strongest point of light, in consequence of which I cannot but consent; and this determination of my mind is the first evidence to myself that I am fully sensible of the riches contained in it.

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form, to prove their knowlege of the truth, (notwithstanding the salvo intended in calling it *self-denied* Charity,) as in teaching them to judge of their faith in the first place by the more immediate and inseparable effects of it upon the mind, or the motions and affections of the soul towards the glorious object presented before it, and then by *being holy in all manner of conversation and godliness* ? Or are none of the inward effects of faith to be regarded, but only the outward fruits ? Is there no religion of the heart ? Is no notice to be taken of those fruits of the spirit which especially relate to the temper and disposition of the soul, by which it appears to be renewed after the image of God ? Our author has given us abundant reason to suspect that he denies or makes light of all inward religion, and many important branches of godliness and virtue, and places it chiefly in subjection to that new form of church authority which he is so zealously setting up : we have, at least, as good grounds for this suspicion, as he has to charge so respectable a body of evangelical preachers with a wicked design, to lead men to establish their own, in opposition to the divine righteousness.

To bring the present question to a conclusion ;... If Jesus Christ is presented before us as the proper Object of dependence, love, honor, &c. then this glorious object cannot be seen, and known in truth, without producing such dependence, love, &c. as are correspondent to what is seen and known of Christ ; and therefore these, and whatever other motions or affections of the soul are necessary effects of the knowlege of this divine Redeemer, are implied in the very nature of saving faith, and ought to be expressly included in every just description of it ; yea, they

they cannot be separated from it, without destroying the most essential distinction betwixt that faith which justifies men and that which is *dead, being alone*. So that, in attempting to laugh out of countenance, and set aside these distinguishing effects our author comes not far short of burlesquing the scriptures, and is busily pulling down with one hand what he pretends to build up with the other.

It is now time to dismiss the question, *What is faith?* and take some notice of the next question in the controversy, *How is faith to be obtained?*

Our author complains of the popular preachers because they teach men to take so much pains in order to come to the knowlege of the truth, that they may be sav'd ; because they insist upon so many pre-requisites, describe the progress of *convictions*, &c, and direct men to pray for the enlightning and quickening influences of the spirit of God, for their conversion and salvation. He tells us, "they mark out as insuperable a task for us, as if Christ had not finished his work," while they give us so many instructions and directions how to obtain that faith by which his righteousness becomes ours ; and says of all the Treatises describing to us the previous steps necessary to be taken in order to conversion, "Long and dreary indeed is the path which they prescribe to us, so that while men continue obsequious hearers of this doctrine, they may indeed be ever learning, but they shall never be able to come to the knowlege of the truth."

Now let us hear what answer he himself will make to the present question. What easier way can he mark out, by which all this labor and toil in order to conversion

version may be spared, yet with an equal or greater probability of our believing and obeying the gospel of salvation? Towards the conclusion of his 5th letter, he supposes it will be inquired, "Are no rules to be observed, no means to be used, no work to be exerted by the human mind or body, in order to justification? † And to this, he says with a smile, the answer is ready: Yes, very many. And they may be thus shortly summed up: Be perfect, keep the commandments, and thou shalt live. The obligation of the law is eternal, so can never be loosed. But perhaps another state of the question will be demanded, and that *faith* should be more directly respected therein." According to this latter state of the question it will stand as it ought, thus, *Are no means or endeavours to be used in order to our understanding and believing the truth?* But he stands by his former answer, only adding by way of ridicule, "Ought not a man to be at pains to attain to the persuasion, that all the pains he takes are good for nothing, except to enhance his guilt?.... Who will travel an hundred miles, in the hopes of being persuaded at the journey's end of his folly in attempting to travel at all?"...If after all the question recurs, *How then is faith to be obtained?* His answer is, * "How have the most remarkable discoveries, that have served most for the accommodation of human life,

† i.e. In order to faith, for, as we have already noted, our author frequently substitutes the phrase, *in order to justification*, instead of this, *in order to believing*; because tho' they convey different ideas, yet there is so near a connection, that he can easily shuffle in the former, when it will serve his turn better.

* Vol. 2. P. 133.

" been obtained ? Has not that providence, which con-
 " tinually watches over the life of man, prevented hu-
 " man skill and industry in giving the first hint of these ?
 " I have been told that the polar direction of the
 " magnet obtruded itself on the first discoverer, when
 " he was in quest of no such thing, being occupied in
 " some very different inquiry....Faith comes not by any
 " human endeavours, or the use of any means, even
 " under the greatest advantages that men can enjoy,
 " but of that same sovereign good pleasure which pro-
 " vided the grand thing believed....Still it must be said
 " that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the
 " word of God. This is the only mean God makes
 " use of for making men wise unto salvation....By means
 " of it, God will bring to the knowlege of the truth
 " all whom he intends to save, in spite of all the arts of
 " the teachers." This last sentence must be explained
 by what he says of those who are relieved by the Gos-
 pel, Vol. 2. P. 67...." The conveyance of the salutary
 " truth to them for their relief, as much prevents every
 " motion of their will, as did the sending of the Savior
 " into the world to die for men ; yea, as did the divine
 " gracious purpose before the world was.

By all these quotations it appears, that instead of that
long and dreary path which the popular preachers pre-
 scribe ; that *insuperable task* which they mark out for
 us by their instructions and directions ; our author's ea-
 sier way is, to use no means or endeavours at all. If
 men have not obtained faith, he assures them there is not
 the least probability of obtaining it by any endeavours,
 any concern or exercise of the mind, or the use of any
 means whatever. But if God intends to save them he
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will bring them to the knowlege of the truth in a way of such absolute sovereignty as is wholly inconsistent with their own care, and intirely prevents every motion of their own wills ; and that, in spite of every thing which can be said or done to the contrary. Faith must obtrude itself upon men, just like such remarkable discoveries as the polar direction of the magnet, or the salutary virtues of some capital medicines. So we must rest contented, till the word is sent in a supernatural manner to convey the saving truth to our minds.....Our author has the honor of making the first full discovery of this easy way of coming to the knowlege of the truth, viz, by waiting in a state of inactivity and despair, till it comes unfought and undesired. And the encouragement he gives men in this way is of a very peculiar kind ; it amounts to this, viz. since God in this method of absolute sovereignty, which is inconsistent with our own tho't and care, will certainly save a surprizing small number of mankind, we may very comfortably sit down quiet with this consideration,... *If one in a thousand, or even in a million shall certainly be made to know the saving truth, in spite of all opposition, perhaps I may be the happy man on whom the lot may fall.* *

* Our author in his 6th Letter, Vol. 2. p. 156, takes occasion by a criticism upon those words of Peter,—*To them who have obtained [BY LOT] like precious faith with us*, to illustrate his own sentiments as to the sovereignty of God, by comparing it to a throw of the dice, in this manner, — “ Of two criminals justly condemned to die, if one escapes
“ by a favourable throw of the dice, and the other dies for his crime,
“ we see mercy in the deliverance of the former, and no injustice in
“ the death of the latter.” It is unnecessary to make any other remark, than only to point my finger at this notion of divine sovereignty, and torture of metaphors.

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He may likewise have the credit of teaching us to reason in this new way about many things which serve for the accommodation of human life, viz, Since the most remarkable discoveries of this kind have prevented human skill and industry, so that God might appear to be the author of them, men ought never to busy themselves in trying to make any new discoveries. God must be acknowledged as providing for us all the comforts of life, they must come as his gifts, and he is free and sovereign in the bestowment of them; therefore they must prevent every motion of man's will, and all our own industry, and we ought to sit down quite easy till he shall think fit to obtrude these things upon us.

But lest it should be suspected that I have taken our author at a disadvantage, or overstrained his meaning, I shall add a few passages more, which may throw farther light upon his sentiments. He says, Vol. 1. P. 119. "Righteousness comes unto men [i.e, *Faith comes to them*, for our author here considers *righteousness* and *faith* as coming at the same time, and so is ready to affirm the same things of both] " *always* unsent for, not " meeting men inquiring after it, but overtaking them " when running away; and according to the significant " phrase of the prophet, as *a voice* behind them.....It " finds men fast asleep, in the desert, in midnight darkness, among the bones of many lately devoured, and " ready to be added to the number. It awakens them " as by the voice of thunder, and conducts them in " safety by it's awful, but friendly lightning." Now if we understand our author in the foregoing paragraph as expressing his sentiments concerning the *manner in which men obtain faith*, which is plainly his design, they

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may be summed up in these few words, The saving truth *always* comes suddenly and unsought, darting like lightning from heaven into the mind ; until it thus comes, men neither know nor care any thing about it, but are all equally fast asleep, in midnight darkness and among the dead. Another sentence of much the same import, but more plainly expressing his mind, we have about 3 pages forward, " Every one who is born of the " spirit, lives merely by what he hears, *without his per-* " *forming any duty at all* ; unless we shall say, it was " the duty of *Lazarus* to hear and live, upon the utter- " ing of the call, *come forth.*" Here the matter is carried farther still, and every man, until he believes, is supposed to be exactly in the same state as *Lazarus* when he was dead. Because the scriptures speak of the ignorance and insensibility of such as were wholly unacquainted with the gospel, in a figurative manner, as in a state of death ; and of all impenitent sinners, so far as they still remain ignorant and insensible under the greatest advantages, as in a similar state ; therefore our author takes it for granted that the figure may be stretched in all cases to its utmost length, till it proves men to have no more sense, or motion in any respect than *dead Lazarus*. Thus men have often made wild work with the strong metaphors of scripture, and drawn strange arguments from illustrations which indeed paint the truth in bright colours, but hold good only in some particular respects. If we must needs allow that all men, before they have saving faith, are *as dead as Lazarus was*, being as absolutely incapable of hearing, having no more power of tho't, will, or motion, let us hear no more of natural conscience in man ; for the dead are not con-scious.

scious of any thing:....Let us hear no more of any *law* obliging them to moral perfection, under whatever considerations ; for there can be no law of *action* for the dead :....Let us never be guilty of the absurdity of endeavouring to disturb their deep repose by any terrors of damnation. — But.....

Have patience, and hear Mr. Sandeman a little farther, Vol. 2. P. 11. “ Let all the prophets and apostles be consulted upon the question, What is required of us in order to acceptance with God ? We will find their unanimous reply to be *Every thing or nothing* ; for no trimming is countenanced among them. If we attempt to do in any sense, we bind ourselves to do all ; yea, the least attempt to do in this matter, is shewn to be *damnable criminal*.”....Now since *acceptance with God* and *eternal salvation*, are phrases which have a very close connexion, and *believing* is in the gospel made necessary to salvation, let us only have leave to substitute the word *salvation* instead of our author’s phrase *acceptance with God*, and so ask the same question in this form, What is required of us in order to *Salvation* ? And to this let us hear his reply in the same words, without any trimming, *Every thing, or nothing*. So we must neither do, will, nor think any thing relating to our own salvation ; no, not so much as entertain the least desire or motion of the soul in order to *believe*, or, which is the same thing, *to know the truth and import of the gospel* ; because every endeavour of this kind is a damning sin..... Surely our author cannot find fault with the change of a word or two, when he himself so often sets us the example.... To justify the foregoing representation, let us consider one passage more, Vol. 2. P. 72.

P. 72. where he reproves *Aspasio* for not making this reply to *Theron*, when he objected against the way of justification by faith as too simple and easy, that “ If he
 “ attempted to do any thing, easy, or difficult, under
 “ the notion of an *act of believing*, or any other *act*, in
 “ order to his acceptance with God, he only thereby
 “ heaped up more wrath against himself. Here we plainly see his meaning, that there is no *act of believing* required of us in order to our acceptance with God, and that a sinner must not make the least attempt *to believe*. Thus he fixes men firmly down, in a state of absolute inactivity of body and mind, to wait easy till *faith comes*.

So much does our author rely on this *metaphysical juggle* which he has invented, viz. that *faith is no act of our own minds, but a meer passive impression*, that he ventures to declare in the very face of the apostle John, that God does not command men to believe. * His gloss upon those words, *This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son*, is, “ that this is a commandment not
 “ requiring any thing of us, but bestowing life by the
 “ knowlege which it conveys :” i.e, we must not understand it as a command to believe, but as a declaration that God conveys knowlege and life by his commanding word. He seems indeed to be cautious of delivering this sentiment so freely and plumply as he does many others ; but it is evident enough, not only in what he says above, but by the pains he takes, especially in his fifth letter to exclude all activity of the mind from the notion of *believing*. And we may see his opposition to all who affirm that *faith, repentance*, or any thing else is required of us in order to our salvation, by the dis-

* Vol. I. P. 168.

gust he shows, in the beginning of his 3d letter, at that question in the Assembly's catechism, *What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?* The answer doubtless offends him as much as the question, *God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth unto us the benefits of redemption.* But let any man of common sense judge, whether such passages as these in the Scriptures must not necessarily be understood as calls, exhortations, or commands to sinners, implying some acts which are properly their own, *...Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand...Repent ye, and believe the gospel.... Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish....Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent....* Whatever forced meaning our author may contrive to put upon these texts, that sense is certainly right in which the hearers would most naturally receive them, and the curious distinction betwixt *faith* and the *act of the mind in believing* was not at that time invented; at least not made public.

It is impossible for our author, after all his subtlety, to show that believing does not imply an act of our minds, unless *thinking* implies no activity of the mind; for it is quite beyond the reach of common understanding to know how a man can believe a thing to be true, without *thinking it to be true*, or judging of its evidence. But what terrifies the letter-writer is, If faith is allowed to be an act of the mind, then men are justified by means of their own act....What then?....He need not be so very
much

much frightened..... This matter can be made quite easy.This act does not originate from any power, work, or contrivance for our own salvation, but from the testimony which God has given of his son in the gospel. It is not properly a work of the law, for it has the most direct relation to the gospel, and becomes a duty only by the publication of the grace of God in Christ Jesus : so we find *believing* opposed to *working* in the sense of the law, as being quite a distinct thing, Rom. 4. 5. *But to him that WORKETH not, but BELIEVETH on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

The word *believeth* in this text, must imply some activity of our own minds with respect to the object mentioned immediately after, or no sense at all can be made of it. Our *believing* justifies and saves, not as a meritorious act of legal obedience, but as it implies a clear view of our own guilt and misery, and intire dependence on the righteousness of God in Christ. This act therefore in its own nature excludes all boasting, agreeable to the argument in the 3d and 4th chapters to the Romans. It is no more the proper ground of our justification, than a criminal's bowing his knees in token of his thankful acceptance of a pardon from his king, if that were made necessary in order to his injoying the benefit of a general proclamation, would unavoidably imply his endeavouring to merit a legal acquittance.

But however any critical reasonings may turn out, it is very certain that the apostolic doctrine of faith is quite clear of all such doubts and subtleties. The apostles speak of *believing* for justification in the same sense in which this word is used in common discourse ; what they

they mean is, that what is proposed for our *belief* should be seen and acknowledged, in such a manner as corresponds to the full import, design, and divine evidence of the testimony ; and no man, without some very critical instruction, would think of starting the doubt whether his own mind has any thing to do in *believing* a common testimony, when it deeply affects his interest, and requires such a conviction of it's truth as may push him on thro' many difficulties.

Of how little use the Law is, as introductory to the Gospel, and how very inconsiderable a difference, in our author's opinion, it makes as to the probability of a man's obtaining the knowledge of divine mercy, whether the commands of God come with force upon his conscience and awaken him to a sense of his guilt and misery, or whether he remains insensible and hardened in sin ; we may see by several passages in his fifth letter, Vol. 2. P. 16....20. where he considers the popular doctrine of *convictions*, &c. That we may not think he points only at some unskilful management of the doctrine about convictions of guilt, when he finds fault with the care, and pains, and exercises of the mind required ; but may be sure that he looks upon every thing of this kind quite unnecessary, answering no other end but that of making a man proud of some distinction betwixt himself and the profane ; he explains his mind in this manner.... “ If two men are led to execution for the same
 “ crime, the one overwhelm'd in sorrow, and the o-
 “ ther elevated to noisy mirth by strong drink, we just-
 “ ly reckon the condition of the latter to be fully as mi-
 “ serable as the former : and if mercy respects mere
 “ misery, wretchedness, and unworthiness, it will cer-
 tainly

" tainly as readily regard the insensible person as him
 " who has the quickest feeling of what is before him."
Let us stop here, and take particular notice of this il-
 lustration of divine mercy.....*Mercy* is here supposed to
 have no regard to any thing else, but *mere misery*, and
 not to be under any kind of direction or limitation by
 wisdom, justice, or any other consideration whatever.
 Now, mercy which is in all respects unlimited must *al-*
ways be excited by the view of misery, and cannot but
 afford help and deliverance to *every* unhappy creature,
 as far as knowlege and power extend. For, to say, that
 mercy may pass by some very miserable objects, and
 leave them under great distress, when there is nothing
 at all to forbid their relief, is a contradiction to the very
 name of mercy. A King, whose character is all mercy,
 who has no regard to the justice of the law, or the con-
 duct of any of his subjects, must always pardon every
 criminal : If his compassions are touched with the sight
 of *mere misery*, he cannot leave any person to be punish-
 ed, while it is in his power to deliver him ; the mo-
 ment he permits this, *mere mercy* ceases, and some con-
 siderations of wisdom and equity take place. The mer-
 cy of such a king could make no difference at all be-
 twixt the malefactor led to execution in the jovial mad-
 ness of strong drink, and him who is overwhelmed in
 sorrow, but must certainly set them both at liberty. But
 if our author hath no other view of divine mercy, than
 of the foolish pity of such a king, *his faith* has a great
 mixture of *falsehood* in it. The plain consequence of
 such a notion of divine mercy is, that the more wicked,
 insensible, and hardened any persons are, so much the
 fairer they stand for mercy : nay ; all mankind, being
miserable,

must certainly be objects of the unlimited mercy of God, and so be happy in the other world. There are several things in the letters which look very favourably towards the former of these consequences ; and the zeal discovered for the repentance and salvation of the generality of sinners at death, intimates that our author has no great aversion to the latter....But let us hear him again.....“ The
 “ divine mercy is not narrow and limited ; nor, like that
 “ of man, backward to interpose, till some inviting and
 “ amiable requisite appear in the object. No; it prevents
 “ the most hardened rebels, and brings every requisite
 “ along with it: or rather the divine grace operates all its
 “ effects by the sole requisite, the righteousness which it
 “ brings to view. It reigns among the insensible and the
 “ dead, thro’ that righteousness unto eternal life.”... Here
 our author goes upon the supposition, that no mercy can be shown, no preparation made for the deliverance of a sinner from his misery, until there is a saving discovery of the righteousness of Christ : for he says, when mercy comes, it brings every requisite along with it, and operates all its effects by bringing the divine righteousness to view, i. e. by giving the knowledge of the saving truth. Accordingly he expressly says, a page or two forward,....
 “ Is it true that they have sinned, or not ? If it stands
 “ true in their conscience, that they have ; this is con-
 “ viction. If they have sinned, this is enough to damn
 “ them, whatever sense they have of their sin. And
 “ this is preparation enough for mercy.”.... Now, in
 other words, what he says here may be thus expressed ;
 ‘ it is no matter what sense men have of their sin ;
 ‘ whether they know any thing more about it than in
 ‘ general that they have sinned ; or whether they them-
 ‘ selves have any striking apprehensions of damnation ;

" tainly as readily regard the insensible person as him
 " who has the quickest feeling of what is before him."
Let us stop here, and take particular notice of this illustration of divine mercy.....*Mercy* is here supposed to have no regard to any thing else, but *mere misery*, and not to be under any kind of direction or limitation by wisdom, justice, or any other consideration whatever. Now, mercy which is in all respects unlimited must *always* be excited by the view of misery, and cannot but afford help and deliverance to *every* unhappy creature, as far as knowledge and power extend. For, to say, that mercy may pass by some very miserable objects, and leave them under great distress, when there is nothing at all to forbid their relief, is a contradiction to the very name of mercy. A King, whose character is all mercy, who has no regard to the justice of the law, or the conduct of any of his subjects, must always pardon every criminal : If his compassions are touched with the sight of *mere misery*, he cannot leave any person to be punished, while it is in his power to deliver him ; the moment he permits this, *mere mercy* ceases, and some considerations of wisdom and equity take place. The mercy of such a king could make no difference at all betwixt the malefactor led to execution in the jovial madness of strong drink, and him who is overwhelmed in sorrow, but must certainly set them both at liberty. But if our author hath no other view of divine mercy, than of the foolish pity of such a king, *his faith* has a great mixture of *falsehood* in it. The plain consequence of such a notion of divine mercy is, that the more wicked, insensible, and hardened any persons are, so much the fairer they stand for mercy : nay ; all mankind, being miserable,

must certainly be objects of the unlimited mercy of God, and so be happy in the other world. There are several things in the letters which look very favourably towards the former of these consequences ; and the zeal discovered for the repentance and salvation of the generality of sinners at death, intimates that our author has no great aversion to the latter....But let us hear him again.....“ The
 “ divine mercy is not narrow and limited ; nor, like that
 “ of man, backward to interpose, till some inviting and
 “ amiable requisite appear in the object. No; it prevents
 “ the most hardened rebels, and brings every requisite
 “ along with it: or rather the divine grace operates all its
 “ effects by the sole requisite, the righteousness which it
 “ brings to view. It reigns among the insensible and the
 “ dead, thro’ that righteousness unto eternal life.”... Here
 our author goes upon the supposition, that no mercy can be shown, no preparation made for the deliverance of a sinner from his misery, until there is a saving discovery of the righteousness of Christ : for he says, when mercy comes, it brings every requisite along with it, and operates all its effects by bringing the divine righteousness to view, i. e. by giving the knowledge of the saving truth. Accordingly he expressly says, a page or two forward,....
 “ Is it true that they have sinned, or not ? If it stands
 “ true in their conscience, that they have ; this is con-
 “ viction. If they have sinned, this is enough to damn
 “ them, whatever sense they have of their sin. And
 “ this is preparation enough for mercy.”.... Now, in
 other words, what he says here may be thus expressed ;
 ‘ it is no matter what sense men have of their sin ;
 ‘ whether they know any thing more about it than in
 ‘ general that they have sinned ; or whether they them-
 ‘ selves have any striking apprehensions of damnation ;

‘ if they are but really in danger of being damned, this
 ‘ is enough to render them proper objects of mercy,
 ‘ without any farther preparations.’ This same senti-
 ment he illustrates by the *miraculous conversion of Paul*,
 whom the merciful truth surprized on the road to Da-
 mascus: and by an artful perversion of the apostle’s ac-
 count of himself, 1 Tim. i. 16. he makes the *manner*
 of this conversion *a pattern to them which should after*
believe; whereas the apostle points out the *long suffering*
 of God towards him as designed for a *pattern*; viz, that
 the chief of sinners might not look upon themselves ut-
 terly excluded from mercy, but be assured that God is
 long-suffering and gracious, and that they also may be
 acquitted from their greatest guilt by believing in Christ
Jesus who came into the world to save sinners.

Once more our author says, “ I must frankly own,
 “ that I see no more difference betwixt a careless and
 “ convicted sinner, than is betwixt a felon ranging his
 “ round at large, and one newly apprehended by the
 “ officers of justice: and for my part, I think it would
 “ look liker an impertinent sarcasm than any thing else
 “ to tell either of these last, that he was now in a very
 “ hopeful way.” The bottom of this last frank decla-
 ration is this, viz. That a convicted sinner knows no-
 thing of the mercy of God, and so has not so much as a ge-
 neral hope of deliverance from the punishment of his sins
 no more than a felon convicted and sentenced by law;
 who, not having heard of a pardon for such offenders,
 despairs and dies. But let us only suppose a general
 proclamation of mercy issued, and that the criminal,
 however tho’tless and hardened before, now becomes
 sensible of his danger, and begins to make some inquiry
 concerning

concerning the tenor of that proclamation; then we shall easily see, he is in a more hopeful way of securing his own life and becoming a good subject, than his fellow who is still ranging his round at large.

Now since the letter-writer has struck such bold strokes to reduce man to a state of perfect inactivity, and make him a lifeless lump of matter ;.... since he has advanced a new notion of *divine mercy*, which never regards what sense men have of their guilt, but will save all the miserable whether they attend to their own misery or not ;.... since he has found out, that every man naturally has a sufficient conviction of sin, without being carried thro' any process of law ;.... he is certainly very consistent with himself in denying any *agency of the Holy Spirit* upon the mind of an unbeliever : for otherwise, the main point would be yielded ; if the Spirit works at all upon the mind before the truth is communicated, something is done for the man in order to his believing. He therefore gives us his notion of the Holy Spirit's agency in these words, * " The Spirit of God acts " as the soul, sense, or meaning of the words wherein " the gospel is delivered." It is difficult to know whether he himself means any thing, when he speaks of the Holy Spirit as the SOUL OF WORDS : perhaps his notion might be as properly expressed by another well known phrase, THE LIGHT WITHIN. At least there seems to be some confusion in his ideas of the *personal agency* of the Spirit, while he thinks of it only as that power which the *words* of the gospel must have upon the mind whenever their true sense or meaning is understood: for throughout his letters he speaks very sparingly of the

*Vol. 2. P. 101.

agency of the Spirit of God in any other view than that of *truth working it's genuine effects* by the perception of it. And so, as he contracts the whole gospel into one truth, he evidently limits the agency of the Spirit to that one truth which saves men ; and inclines to consider the Spirit as undistinguishable from that *temper of mind* formed by the knowledge of that one truth. Thus he explains himself, Vol. 1. P. 295 ; where, speaking of the power of the prime enemy of the truth (whom, in another place, he very complaisantly calls a *certain great Genius*, and treats with uncommon politeness thro' the whole of that ingenious history of him which he gives us in the latter part of his 4th letter) as manifest wherever the sentiment of self-dependence appears, and working only in and by that principle, He sets *the truth* in opposition to the agency of that evil spirit ; and speaks thus.... " Wherever the sacred truth is believed, there
 " acts the *spirit of the truth*, whose agency is insepara-
 " ble from it : and wherever the faith of it shews itself
 " working by love, there the power of that Holy Spirit
 " is manifest. And, in general, it may be said of every
 " doctrine about the concerns of man with God, that a
 " certain spirit or temper of mind goes along with it."...
 Again he says, Vol. 2. P. 102, 103. " There is no
 " separating the agency of the Holy Spirit from the
 " knowledge of the truth. To know the truth is life
 " eternal ; and this life is begun and supported by the
 " Spirit of Christ. On the other hand, all who resist
 " the truth, and do not admit it's evidence, are said
 " to resist the Holy Ghost."..... When we hear one
 " describing to us how he first obtained peace with God,
 " if we find him taking pains to inform us of the in-
 " fluences

fluences of grace he felt in his heart, and the operations of the spirit leading him on to conversion, we may safely say, This is a spirit that speaks of himself; this is not the true grace of God. So we can be at no loss to see what sort of conversion he has undergone." By all the foregoing quotations I think it appears, that our author denies any agency of the Holy Spirit upon the mind before a man is acquainted with the saving truth.

Finally ; that he may compleat his scheme, our author denies an unbeliever the privilege of *prayer*.

To prove this, I shall content myself with quoting one or two plain sentences. Vol. 1. P. 153. having observed that the first approach of the divine grace to men is made by presenting to their view the gift of righteousness, He says,.... " Therefore when we hear men who are pained about acceptance with God, taught to expect and pray for grace, to help them to convictions, faith, repentance, or any thing else, in order to their finding relief in Christ's righteousness ; we may be very sure, that this is not the true grace of God, but the false, or a corruption of the true. And we may be as sure, that God will regard no prayer but that of faith." And that we may not think he means any other *faith* but that which saves men, his meaning is precisely determined by what immediately follows ;.... " The popular preachers themselves, finding some difficulty here, to reconcile their self-justifying labor to scripture language, incline to talk to us of some preliminary faith, as necessary to introduce the principal faith, that is a faith in God's ability to work faith in us." Our author may make himself merry

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by punning upon the word faith : but he who has not some faith in God, especially in his justice, power, and wrath, cannot believe in Jesus Christ his Son.

Thus Mr. Sandeman represents all men, until they know the truth in a saving manner, as in a state of utter despair, like the Devils, knowing nothing, believing nothing at all, but what natural conscience suggests, left intirely destitute of all divine help, discouraged even from the least desire to obtain mercy, and forbidden to ask so much as one petition of the God of heaven.

No scheme could be invented more directly tending to undermine the gospel under pretence of great friendship to it, and to harden men in unbelief and excess of wickedness, than this which we have in the letters. Instead of magnifying the righteousness of God, it tends to give men the most dishonorable tho'ts of the wisdom and equity of the divine government. What can be more contrary to the whole tenor of the sacred writings, than to assure men, that *Mercy* will break over every obstacle to save them, if God has determined the lot in their favor ;....that however insensible they are, or abandoned to wickedness, they really will stand a better chance for mercy, than if they should set themselves to consider and learn the way of righteousness ;....that tho' they may indeed be told, in a sarcastic way, to be perfect and keep the law, this would not only be a vain and foolish attempt, but render them still more abominable in the sight of God, as they must thereby be labouring after righteousness in direct opposition to the divine righteousness ;....and that in plain terms they are not required and are wholly incapable of doing any thing of any kind, in order to gain the knowlege of the gospel, and must not
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indulge the least tho't or desire, or make the least motion in order to escape misery and find the way to happiness.

Is it possible any man should be so far infatuated as to take such doctrines of licentiousness to be founded on the word of God? Even the letter-writer himself must be ashamed of them, when he reviews his own scheme. Will he speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? The divine righteousness never was designed to excuse, much less to encourage men in sin; tho' it must first be made known to man by a revelation from heaven, yet when it is revealed, and all proper evidences are set before them, either their natural faculties may and ought to be exercised in order to the knowledge and belief of this revelation, or else there can be no such thing as the aggravated sin of rejecting Jesus Christ and his gospel.

But it is not agreeable to my design in this part of the examination of the letters, to enter far into the arguments which may be bro't against our author's scheme. I shall therefore dismiss the present question, How is faith to be obtained? and proceed briefly to consider the last, viz.

In what manner are we to gain comfort by the gospel?

This coincides with the foregoing question, so far as comfort is inseparably connected with faith, and must be proportioned to the *consciousness of our own faith*. Our author affirms that comfort and relief are inseparable from *believing*; but since he seems to agree intirely with other divines in distinguishing the *assurance of faith* from the *assurance of hope*, the present question may be considered as more especially relating to the assurance of hope.

Now

Now it will properly finish this first part of our remarks, if I show, that no *comfort* can ever be gained from the gospel, upon our author's plan.

That this may appear, *we must observe in the first place*, that Mr. Sandeman does not very openly differ from other preachers as to the methods in which the *assurance of hope* is gained. He affirms that faith must shew itself by love and good works; and that christians must examine themselves as to their actions and the motives of them; he says, * " It cannot farther appear that " any man has known the grace of God in truth, than " he is led by that knowlege to give all diligence to the " full assurance of hope unto the end." He speaks of the witness of the Spirit as ' giving a clear evidence of the truth, and comforting all who follow the faith and practice of the apostles;' and sometimes writes in very strong terms of confidence towards God. Indeed he discovers no great affection for "*heart work*," or the inward exercises of the soul about religion, and endeavours to beat off professors from 'poring much upon their own hearts in order to form a judgment of themselves.' He speaks also very sparingly of the mortification of inward lusts, and improvement in humility, meekness, patience, and other essential parts of the christian temper; and seems very shy of taking into his scheme of religion those virtues which are generally *esteemed among men*, and recommended as *lovely and of good report, and praise worthy*. On the contrary he very much confines his notion of *love and good works*, to the love of those brethren towards one another who have associated upon his own plan of fellowship, and those distributions of their substance which are made under the direction of

* Vol. 2. P. 172.

such

such churches. So that much fault may be found in his scheme on all these accounts, which may be particularly pointed out in the last part of these remarks.

We must *also observe*, that he does not hold any absolute assurance of our own salvation, or certainty of a christian's perseverance. Speaking against Mr. Hervey's notion of assurance as connected with faith, he says, Vol. I. p. 34, "*That Christ died for me*, is a point not so easily settledthis is a point which the scripture no where ascertains : so far from it, that it often affirms the final perdition of many, not merely hearers of the gospel, but who have heard and received the word with joy ; yea of those who have made such progress, that their only deficiency is, that their fruit came not to perfection. It affirms that such as have been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made PARTAKERS OF THE HOLY GHOST, and have *tasted the good word of God*, and the powers of the world to come, may yet fall away irrecoverably." Now if we compare this concession, which the scriptures oblige him to make, with what we have before seen of his sentiments, viz, that the saving truth always finds men in midnight darkness, &c. and that the agency of the Holy Spirit is always inseparable from the knowledge of that truth, we shall see that he is forced to contradict himself. He must either allow, that men may be not only wonderfully enlightened, but made partakers of the Holy Ghost, i. e. have saving faith, and yet fall away irrecoverably ; or grant that the holy spirit may act upon the minds of men before they know that truth which is effectual to their justification. I do not see how he can avoid this dilemma, viz. either to affirm that men

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may

may fall away irrecoverably from the true faith of the gospel, or hold that unbelievers may have the spirit acting on their souls. For he says, Vol. 2. p. 171, 172, "Believers are preserved from falling away, by the fear of falling away. Paul says to the Hebrews, *Let us fear lest a promise being left, &c.* Yea, he says of himself, I keep under my body &c. Thus they that believe come to be settled in the assurance of hope." Again, in the appendix to the third edition of the letters, Vol. 2. p. 305, we have the sentiments of one of his friends, which doubtless he publishes as fully expressing his own; who, speaking of rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, says, "I do not see that this rejoicing will exclude a fear of coming short of the promised rest, of being a castaway, or of drawing back unto perdition: for I apprehend this may be maintained in perfect consistence with the record, that God hath given to us eternal life in his Son. It will yet admit of a jealousy, lest we have deceived ourselves, mistaken the truth, or believed in vain, notwithstanding we have been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, &c. For the apostle will warrant me to say, there are *better things which accompany salvation.* Therefore I do not perceive how a man is emboldened to say, *He loved me and gave himself for me*, before his *calling and election is made sure* by faith working with his works; for his faith must be justified by its fruits (as I apprehend) before he can say with confidence, I BELIEVE, therefore I sh^o not come into condemnation." All this is very true, very agreeable to the sacred scriptures, but not at all consistent with the foundation on which Mr. Sandeman is building.

Let

Let us now see how all these things will hang together. According to the first principles of the scheme we have been considering under the preceding question, all to whom the saving truth comes, must be persons who know nothing of the righteousness of God, ' who are not seeking after it, who are in midnight darkness, extremely insensible, and dead, wholly destitute of the Spirit's agency, and in a state of utter despair. But now, in the next breath, he tells us, men may be enlightened, comforted by the gospel, made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have the rejoicing of hope, and in short every thing which a true believer has, as far as it is possible for a man to be conscious of any thing in himself, may go on and make great proficiency in good works, and yet at length turn out to be an unbeliever, and a castaway. What shall we make of this jargon? An unbeliever, enlightened; and yet in midnight darkness!.... partaking of the Holy Ghost, and tasting the good word of God; and yet not knowing the sense or meaning of the words of the gospel, being intirely destitute of the Spirit of truth!.... rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; and yet " knowing nothing but what makes him miserable!"....having no faith of any kind; and yet having no other fault but this, that his fruit does not come to perfection!

Is there any thing in the first comfort and relief which comes with faith? Can any man distinguish it from the joy of the hypocrite? If not, why is this opposed to the despair of an unbeliever, and made the criterion of the knowlege of the truth?

May a person have the full assurance of faith? May he be sure that what he knows is the very same truth which the

the apostles believed ; that truth which saves men ? If he may ; no reason can be assigned why he may not have the full assurance of hope : for we must be certain of salvation, if we are certain that our faith is genuine, the very same which the gospel requires ; unless we doubt of that divinely established connexion, that *he that believeth shall be saved*. This our author will not easily acknowledge such assurance ; because then all fear of falling away will be removed, and so one part of his plan intirely demolished. Nor indeed do we desire him to yield this article, since it is the constant exhortation of the gospel to all christians to be diligent in making their calling and election sure.

But if a man cannot be sure that what he knows is the very truth which saves men, how can he have sufficient encouragement to pray, or ingage in any of the duties of religion ? He cannot be assured that one of his petitions is heard. He cannot firmly depend upon any assistance of the Spirit of God. He must feel a fatal damp to all his comfort and joy, arising from a constant suspicion that he may be still intirely ignorant of the truth, and no more likely to be acquainted with it than the most hardened sinner that breathes. Yea ; this consideration is enough to keep his mind always in a state of the most distressing uneasiness, that if his faith is not at present the very same which the gospel declares to be saving, not only his hope is vain, but all his works, under whatever plausible pretence they are done, only serve to render him more damnably criminal. Instead of having any hope, that by going on still in the ways of well-doing he may be more likely to know the saving truth, if he has not yet obtained it, and to gain greater
comfort

comfort by it ; he will be liable to continual depression of spirit by this melancholy reflection, that the more careful, sincere, and diligent he endeavours to be in his obedience to Christ, so far he renders himself a ranker pharisee, and makes his own damnation sure. Who then would travel thro' such a long and difficult road, at the hazard of finding himself at last got at an irrecoverable distance from the kingdom of heaven ; when he might have had a much better chance of being happy, if he had made no attempt in order to his own salvation, but left it intirely to divine sovereignty to grant him faith in his last moments.

If a man cannot consider any commands or exhortations as directed to him, until he is conscious of a new instinct implanted in him, or, in other words, of his own knowlege of the gospel ; but must look upon himself still as under a law which requires absolute perfection, and yet assures him that he only makes himself worse and worse by endeavouring to obey ; what shall he do ? If he cannot be quite sure his faith is genuine, he can never be clearly persuaded that he ought to regard the precepts, any more than the promises of the gospel ; or indeed that he shall not make himself more miserable by every step he takes. No comfort therefore can be gained by any works of obedience to the gospel, unless a man is first of all sure of his faith, because he cannot have any sufficient confidence that his works are the fruits of faith, or that any of these things are required of him.

It is impossible for a sinner who is in such a state of darkness and despair, as our author represents every man to be in who has not believed unto justification, to find any comfort, until he knows some reason of hope ; or
until

until he has some good reason to suppose he is delivered from that dreadful condition, in which he is threatened with amazing destruction, while he is deprived of the least power of motion in order to his escape. But he cannot have any reason at all to imagine himself delivered from this state of despair, unless he knows his justification and salvation to be possible. Now our author affirms that " Every one who is persuaded that he *may* " *be justified* is in reality justified, and accordingly finds " joy and peace in believing." * But since he denies that a man can be quite sure he is in a justified state, he must also deny that any person can be sure of the *possibility* of his own justification: the plain consequence of which is, that no professor can ever obtain comfortable hope, because he never certainly knows that he *may be justified*.

It is difficult to reconcile the several parts of our author's scheme, so as to make any tolerable sense of them, upon any other principle than this, viz. that we are to take the first general knowledge, or seeming persuasion *that Christ hath made atonement for sins*, to be saving faith; and to set out from this, as the " turning point from despair to good hope," to make our faith perfect by works. He labors with all his skill to keep men from troubling themselves to find out whether this faith is the pure unmixed truth, by any immediate impressions on their hearts; because this would fall in very far with the popular doctrine, and occasion the same exercises. But he has a shorter way to comfort; it is only to *comply with his terms of communion*, or, in other words, to *come into the bosom of the MOTHER CHURCH*, as he has

* Corresp. with S. P. p. 31.

lately settled the order of it ; and we need not be distressed with any farther doubts whether we know the truth, but may go to work as chearfully as we please.

But what if we shou'd be deceived in this first faith ? We must not doubt it :.... much less give it up :.... for then all our comfort is lost, and we can have no heart to do any thing more.

Our author assures us “ it is highly criminal for any man to *re-examine* the faith, or call in question the truth,” * i.e. *what he believes* : we must therefore set out upon a mere presumption, and persist in a falsehood, if we have not obtained the very faith of the gospel ; nor can we ever know but that all our hope and high enjoyments are *the light of our own fire, and the sparks which we have kindled* ; unless giving all our goods to feed the poor, according to the orders of the church, may be taken as an infallible evidence of true charity. But if faith is of so critical and slippery a nature that the warmest professors from the apostolic times to this day have, almost to a man, been fatally deceived, this is quite enough to damp all the comfort of every one who trembles at the tho't of self-deceit.

Upon the whole, our Author's scheme has a plain tendency to “blindfold and decoy men;” to take off their attention from the genuine effects of faith, and fix it on the singularities of a party ; to harden finners in a course of wickedness, and lead men along in the direct road to destruction, with a delusive expectation of being saved by Christ's righteousness while they are not cleansed from their old sins.

* Vol. 2. P. 141.

The End of PART First.

(13)

Received of the Hon. the Secy. of State
for the Colonies the sum of £1000
on account of the purchase of the
manuscript of the late Sir John
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